United Nations A/C.5/71/SR.19

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
3 January 2017

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 9 December 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Sene

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Combating sexual exploitation and abuse
(A/71/97 and A/71/99)

1. **Mr. Kisob** (Office of Human Resources Management) drew the Committee's attention to the report of the External Independent Review Panel appointed to review the response of the United Nations to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic (A/71/99), which had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/286. The report had been submitted in December 2015 and subsequently made publicly available without changes.

2. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on combating sexual exploitation and abuse (A/71/97), he said that the report provided an update on initiatives undertaken across the United Nations system to combat sexual exploitation and abuse since February 2016, including ongoing efforts to address the Panel's recommendations.

3. In response to the Panel's report, the Secretary-General had established a high-level steering group, under the leadership of the Chef de Cabinet, comprising the heads of departments and offices and representatives of funds and programmes involved in responding to issues of sexual abuse and gender-based violence. The high-level membership of the steering group was designed to ensure the direct involvement of senior officials in strengthening the system-wide response to combating sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the Secretary-General had appointed a Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse with a mandate to organize, unify and prioritize system-wide measures for prevention and response. Whereas departments and offices retained direct authority and oversight with respect to their operational mandates for monitoring and reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse, the role of the Special Coordinator was to ensure coherence and harmonization across the United Nations system.

4. Following the extensive review of the systems and procedures in place for preventing and responding to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by the Special Coordinator and overseen by the high-level steering group, the report described the comprehensive strategy of the Secretary-General for strengthening the Organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse. It also reaffirmed the United Nations policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse and set out the concrete measures being taken to prevent such acts by United Nations personnel, as well as to ensure accountability and provide support to victims.

5. Leadership at all levels recognized the need to approach cases of sexual exploitation and abuse through a victim-centred, human rights-focused lens, irrespective of the nature or affiliation of the perpetrator. Accountability mechanisms must also be strengthened; the report outlined a number of measures taken in that regard, and further efforts had been initiated since its publication. The Secretary-General's strategy aimed to create synergies between initiatives already under way, including in the Department of Field Support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in order to strengthen practices system-wide.

6. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/643), said that the Secretary-General's report (A/71/97) provided an update on the progress made since the issuance of his report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/70/729).

7. While welcoming the appointment of the Special Coordinator to address the issue of system-wide coherence, the Advisory Committee noted the continued fragmentation of the response of the various entities dealing with sexual exploitation and abuse and the need for a clearer and more coherent framework for preventive and responsive actions and accountability on their part. It strongly supported the implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy and was convinced that progress in that regard could be

achieved only with strong, sustained leadership at the highest level in all entities of the United Nations system.

8. After more than a decade of incremental steps taken to address the matter of sexual exploitation and abuse, and in view of the persistent and egregious nature of related allegations, the General Assembly might wish to invite the Secretary-General, as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to conduct a system-wide assessment of current capacities and future requirements concerning issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse and the Organization's response to them, and to develop further proposals thereon for the Assembly's consideration.

9. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group strongly supported the United Nations zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse, which should apply equally to all perpetrators, whether uniformed personnel or civilians, and irrespective of their rank or the colour of their helmet. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to ensuring that the Organization would not remain silent or passive in the face of reported incidents, as well as to protecting and supporting victims. Particularly in the light of the findings of the External Independent Review Panel, accountability must be enforced at all levels of the Organization; strong, sustained leadership at the highest levels would be required to achieve progress. The Group appreciated the efforts of the Special Coordinator to improve system-wide coherence and engagement with Member States, identify root causes and risk factors, analyse gaps and weaknesses in current structures and share best practices. It also commended the contribution of the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

10. Despite the Assembly's commitment to combating sexual exploitation and abuse, the Organization's response to that issue remained fragmented; a clearer and more coherent framework for prevention and response was therefore required. In particular, more must be done to improve predeployment training, address the root causes and risk factors contributing to sexual exploitation and abuse, respond swiftly to allegations, and provide support and protection for victims. Leading by example, the Organization must also pursue justice from start to finish in order to ensure that all perpetrators were held accountable.

11. Notwithstanding the historic measures adopted by the Assembly at its seventieth session aimed at ensuring full transparency in the reporting of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, without distinction between United Nations and non-United Nations troops, there was a lack of coordination in reporting on preventive, enforcement and remedial actions to address sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, clear information on the overall scope of, and linkages between, relevant reports and databases was not available. System-wide collaboration should therefore be improved in order to provide stakeholders with comprehensive information to strengthen the coordination of the Organization's response.

12. The Group welcomed the Secretary-General's outreach measures and the work of the high-level steering group and looked forward to the continued efforts of the incoming Secretary-General. It encouraged the Secretariat to work actively with Member States and, in that regard, commended the efforts undertaken by troop- and police-contributing countries to strengthen coordination with the United Nations and combat sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. The Group would continue to work with all parties to protect the most vulnerable and uphold the name, reputation, credibility and integrity of the Organization.

13. **Mr. De Preter** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, said that his delegation attached great importance to peacekeeping, the Organization's flagship activity, and thus to the protection of civilians. It had consistently expressed its support for a zero-tolerance and zero-impunity policy for all civilian, military and police personnel in United Nations and other international peace operations. In that connection, he welcomed the Secretary-General's work to implement a policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability at all levels,

particularly the wide-ranging proposals relating to preventive, enforcement and remedial action, including support to victims, and encouraged further efforts in that regard by the incoming Secretary-General.

14. He welcomed the Special Coordinator's report and the efforts made to harmonize the Organization's response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by increasing system-wide coherence, with an emphasis on training and preventive action. Measures must nevertheless be taken to strengthen assessment of allegations prior to transmission to the Member States concerned, improve the Secretariat's methods of communicating allegations, and enhance the process for sharing information with relevant Member States. While responsibility for prosecution and application of sanctions rested with the Member States whose troops, police or civilian personnel were involved in such crimes, coordinated efforts must be made to strengthen prevention, investigate credible allegations, ensure timely disciplinary action, and guarantee accessible and coherent reporting mechanisms and support for victims.

15. Security Council resolution 2272 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/286 were positive steps towards developing a comprehensive, transparent and Organization-wide approach to combating sexual exploitation and abuse and strengthening accountability. He noted with satisfaction the Assembly's agreement to strengthen the Conduct and Discipline Unit of the Department of Field Support and emphasized the need to improve the capacity of individual peacekeeping missions to address conduct and discipline issues.

16. Training for peacekeeping personnel must include predeployment and in-mission training on human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and protecting civilians, particularly children, in order to ensure that such personnel met the highest standards of behaviour. There was nothing more harmful to crisis management and peacekeeping than the commission of abuses by those serving the Organization in an advisory, mentorship, training or protective capacity. Such acts destroyed lives, while undermining the legitimacy of international peacekeeping and the trust of local populations; they must therefore be addressed as a matter of priority.

17. **Ms. Bodenmann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, paid tribute to the thousands of United Nations personnel who demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism in discharging their mandates. To safeguard the quality and integrity of peacekeeping work, it was essential to hold perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse accountable and prevent the recurrence of such acts.

18. The two delegations were concerned about the high and growing number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in field missions, particularly as the actual number might be much higher than reported. The Organization must adopt a unified, system-wide strategy for tackling sexual exploitation and abuse that focused on the conduct of all personnel, including police, United Nations officials and mission experts. She welcomed the creation of the position of the Special Coordinator and supported the extension of her mandate. She also supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations on strengthening system-wide coherence, in particular on the need to conduct a system-wide assessment of current capacities and future requirements relating to sexual exploitation and abuse and to develop further proposals in that regard.

19. To keep the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse at a minimum, efforts must be made to strengthen prevention and ensure that investigations were conducted in a professional manner with respect for due process, with a view to holding perpetrators accountable and guaranteeing justice for victims. The full cooperation of Member States was indispensable to the effective implementation of the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy. The two delegations likewise supported a victim-centred and human-rights-based approach to addressing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, whether or not the perpetrators were under United Nations command. Lastly, she expected that the Secretary-General designate would continue to combat sexual exploitation and abuse in the interest of safeguarding the Organization's credibility.

20. **Ms. Norman Chalet** (United States of America) said that her delegation firmly supported the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and the measures introduced to strengthen prevention, enforcement and assistance to victims, as well as to enhance transparency and hold perpetrators accountable.

21. She looked forward to the finalization of the victim assistance protocol to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel, as efforts to address other aspects of sexual exploitation and abuse would ultimately be ineffective if victims were not protected. She also welcomed the establishment of the high-level steering group and the creation of the Office of the Special Coordinator, emphasizing the serious consequences of policy fragmentation and gaps in the United Nations system's response to sexual exploitation and abuse, as outlined in the report of the External Independent Review Panel.

22. Although no proposals requiring Member State approval had been presented at the current session, the Secretary-General's report outlined a number of initiatives that Member States must undertake to address sexual exploitation and abuse committed by their own nationals. Noting the importance of focusing on the Organization as a whole and translating words into actions in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, she stressed the need to ensure that the examples of Member State good practices cited in the Secretary-General's report were shared in an online platform for the benefit of all Member States.

23. **Ms. Coto-Ramírez** (Costa Rica) said that the eyes of the world were on the United Nations, which had failed to respond decisively by sending a clear message that acts of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by the same individuals responsible for protecting the victims would not go unpunished. Member States' repudiation of such crimes must be translated into concrete action to ensure that perpetrators were duly punished and such acts did not recur.

24. She welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to improve prevention mechanisms and urged all parties to redouble their efforts to eradicate and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and punish perpetrators. To ensure effective prevention, the Organization must adopt a comprehensive, unified strategy focused on eliminating causes and risk factors rather than addressing cases on an individual basis after violations were committed. In that regard, it was essential to ensure strong coordination among departments and effective collaboration between leaders and all relevant actors. Such abominable acts violated the right to protection of local populations, whom peacekeepers were mandated to serve.

25. The Organization must respect individual human rights, relentlessly investigate perpetrators, including those in the chain of command, and end impunity. In addition, peacekeeping operations must have the necessary financial and human resources to protect women and children. In most cases, the United Nations was the last glimmer of hope for communities; it must not fail them by damaging the credibility of peacekeeping operations.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41: Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/71/661; A/C.5/71/12)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1: Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/71/662; A/C.5/71/13)

26. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedures of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41: Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (A/C.5/71/12), said that additional resources in the amount of $692,600 were proposed under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, for the purpose of convening a United Nations conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

27. Introducing the Secretary-General's statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1: Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (A/C.5/71/13), she said that the draft resolution would entail additional resources totalling $295,900 under section 2, General Assembly and

Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, for activities relating to the establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile material cut-off treaty. A similar amount for the group's activities proposed for 2018 would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

28. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the reports of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.41 (A/71/661) and draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1 (A/71/662), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the requested resources relating to draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, with a small downward adjustment. It therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt the draft resolutions, additional appropriations of $602,600 and $289,000 for the implementation of draft resolutions A/C.1/71/L.41 and A/C.1/71/L.65/Rev.1, respectively, would be required under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing charges against the contingency fund.

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*)

Thematic cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions (A/71/365/Add.3 and A/71/595/Add.3)

29. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2017 under thematic cluster III (A/71/365/Add.3), said that the report contained the proposed budgets for eight of the nine missions grouped under cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions. The proposed resources for the United Nations Mission in Colombia would be presented in a separate addendum. In 2016, cluster III missions had contributed to conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security through early warning, mediation, preventive diplomacy, support for electoral processes, good offices and peacebuilding.

30. The proposed resources for 2017 amounted to approximately $220 million, representing an increase of $28.6 million compared with the approved resources for 2016, a difference mainly attributable to the proposed requirements for the phased re-establishment of a permanent presence in Libya of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), with effect from 2016, in line with Security Council resolutions 2259 (2015), 2273 (2016) and 2291 (2016). The Mission had been temporarily relocated to Tunis in 2014 following a significant deterioration of the security situation in Libya.

31. Taking into account the estimated combined overexpenditure of approximately $1.4 million for 2016 for cluster III missions, attributable to the additional requirements for UNSMIL, which would be covered through a commitment authority approved by the Advisory Committee, the General Assembly was requested to approve total resource requirements for the missions in the amount of $221.5 million.

32. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/595/Add.3), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the resources proposed for missions grouped under cluster III, subject to the recommendations contained in its report, and trusted that detailed information on the reductions arising from its recommendations would be provided to the General Assembly.

33. The Advisory Committee also recommended approval of the staffing proposals for the United Nations Office for West Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau . With regard to the additional positions proposed for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the Advisory Committee recommended approval of two positions of Political Affairs Officers (P-4) and one

position of Human Rights Officer (P-3), but recommended against establishing a second position of Human Rights Officer (P-3). The Advisory Committee also recommended against the proposed establishment of eight positions of Radio Operators, as the related request should have been submitted through the budget of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia rather than UNSOM. Should the functions of Radio Operators be required immediately, the Secretary-General might consider authorizing the use of general temporary assistance.

34. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the projected expenditure for UNSMIL for 2016 had been adjusted downward by $5.7 million owing to low resource utilization, as the budget for 2016 had been based on plans to return the Mission to Tripoli, a move that had been prevented by security conditions. With regard to staffing requirements, the Advisory Committee recommended the application of a 70 per cent vacancy rate for new international staff and a 20 per cent delayed deployment factor for United Nations Guard Unit personnel. It recommended against the establishment of a backstopping position (P-3) in the Department of Field Support and encouraged the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the organizational structure and staffing requirements of UNSMIL on the basis of a workload analysis. Lastly, the Advisory Committee recommended a total reduction of $3 million to the proposed increase of $15.8 million in the resource requirements for operational costs.

35. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group took note of the proposed resource requirements for eight missions under cluster III and would seek further details in informal consultations.

36. **Mr. Hamasi** (Libya) expressed his delegation's concern that the reports under the current item had not been issued in time to be sent to his capital for consideration.

37. UNSMIL had been established by the Security Council in its resolution 2009 (2011) and its mandate had been extended by the Council several times since, most recently in its resolution 2291 (2016), to 15 December 2016. The Mission's mandate would again be extended on 13 December 2016, with no modifications to its programme of work as set out in preceding Security Council resolutions, which would continue to be guided by the priorities defined in paragraph 9 of resolution 2213 (2015).

38. He welcomed the Mission's efforts to implement the Libyan Political Agreement with a view to bridging the gap between the country's political parties. According to the information provided in the reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee, it would be difficult for the Mission, which was currently operating from outside Libya, to discharge all of its mandated tasks. At present, its work was limited to the political track and reconciling the differing views of political parties and implementing the Political Agreement. He hoped that political and security conditions in Libya would stabilize so that the Mission could return to Tripoli to carry out its mandate and help the Government of National Accord get through the transitional period and address the challenges the period presented, as outlined in the Secretary-General's most recent report to the Security Council on UNSMIL (S/2016/1011).

39. His Government would make every effort to cooperate with the Mission to overcome all procedural and security-related obstacles to its work. In that regard, a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Libya and UNSMIL was currently being drafted. His Government looked forward to having all Mission staff return to Tripoli, as that would bolster public confidence in the political process and underscore that the Mission was sincere in its desire to provide assistance during the transitional period. It would also help reduce the Mission's expenses, particularly travel expenditures.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.